

**To:** Woolford, James[Woolford.James@epa.gov]  
**From:** Gartner, Lois  
**Sent:** Fri 8/14/2015 5:54:12 PM  
**Subject:** FW: REVISED PRESS RELEASE WITH EPA-REVIEW NOW

Found a few style, punctuation errors (highlighted in yellow) to pass on, if you so choose.

**From:** Cheatham, Reggie  
**Sent:** Friday, August 14, 2015 1:33 PM  
**To:** Woolford, James; Stanislaus, Mathy; Breen, Barry; Natarajan, Nitin  
**Cc:** Tulis, Dana  
**Subject:** FW: REVISED PRESS RELEASE WITH EPA-REVIEW NOW

FYSA....reopening statement

Reggie Cheatham, Director

Office of Emergency Management, USEPA

202.564.8003 (O); 202.689.9400 (M);

[cheatham.reggie@epa.gov](mailto:cheatham.reggie@epa.gov)

**From:** Ostrander, David  
**Sent:** Friday, August 14, 2015 1:17 PM  
**To:** Eoc, Epahq; Cheatham, Reggie; Tulis, Dana  
**Subject:** FW: REVISED PRESS RELEASE WITH EPA-REVIEW NOW

**From:** Harrison, Melissa  
**Sent:** Friday, August 14, 2015 11:11 AM  
**To:** McGrath, Shaun  
**Cc:** Ostrander, David; Ruhl, Christopher; Calanog, Steve; Hestmark, Martin  
**Subject:** Re: REVISED PRESS RELEASE WITH EPA-REVIEW NOW

Thanks everyone! All approved here. Moving to EOC at HQ. I gave them a 11:20 deadline. Revised below.

Durango, CO – The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) has collected and analyzed sediment from the Animas River. The data show levels of contamination are below what would be a concern for human health during typical recreational exposure.

Based on this statement from the state health department, Sheriff Sean Smith has made the decision to open the river to recreational use with the attached health advisory from CDPHE. Sheriff Smith said, “My primary concern is the public health and safety of our community. In an abundance of caution, with the consultation of all our partner agencies, I issued the order to close the river to recreational uses on Thursday, August 6. With the release of preliminary results from the State Health Department and its accompanying recommendation, I am opening our river for recreation effective Friday, August 14, 2015, at noon with the health advisory.”

***Inconsistent capitalization of “state health department”***

Sediment is just one indicator of a healthy river, and there is some level of contamination in most Colorado rivers because of past mining activities and the state’s geology ~~of the state~~. CDPHE does not anticipate adverse health effects from exposure to contaminants detected in the water and sediment during typical recreational activities. The Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry recommends that to avoid excessive skin exposures to sediments, adults and children should wash exposed skin with soap and water after prolonged sediment contact. Additionally, any clothing that comes into contact with sediment should be laundered as soon as possible.

In addition, the EPA sediment samples collected in the Animas River from Bakers Bridge to north of Durango have been analyzed but not yet validated. EPA has done a preliminary review of the data, which included a comparison to background to determine if the metal concentrations are consistent with pre-incident levels. Metal results that exceeded pre-incident levels were subsequently compared to risk-based screening levels. These preliminary results indicate that minor exceedances of background concentrations were observed for antimony, lead, silver, and thallium. However, comparison to risk-based screening values found these exceedances to below risk screening levels.

The review and interpretation of these data was a collaborative effort that included state and local members of the Unified Area Command Durango. Once EPA sediment data is validated, it will be posted online at: <http://www2.epa.gov/goldkingmine>

While conditions in the Animas River today have been determined safe for recreational use, irrigation ditches that draw from the river currently are being flushed, and agricultural users should continue to exercise patience until this process is complete.

La Plata County has flushed and allowed use of some irrigation ditches for watering crops such as wheat and alfalfa. The county is systematically working to reopen all ditches. Operators of ditches that use water from the Animas River are asked to call the La Plata County Call Center at 970-385-8700 so officials can coordinate reopening of all river head gates. Flushing may cause local temporary, discoloration of the Animas River, which should clear quickly.

Gardeners who use water from the Animas River and grow leafy vegetables and root crops should call the CSU Extension office at 970-382-6463. Answers to questions about such crops are site-specific.

The Colorado Department of Agriculture State Veterinarian's Office is confident that water from the Animas River can be used to water livestock. "The information we have received shows that water quality levels are comparable to those prior to the spill," said Dr. Carl Heckendorf, State Veterinarian for the Colorado Department of Agriculture. "We will continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates if it becomes necessary."

Local, tribal, state and federal agencies will continue to test water and sediment routinely and will respond quickly to any potential issues.

Incident information is posted to the La Plata County website at <http://www.co.laplata.co.us/emergency>, San Juan Basin Health Department's Website at [www.sjbhd.org](http://www.sjbhd.org), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/LaPlataCounty](http://www.facebook.com/LaPlataCounty), and <http://www.facebook.com/sanjuanbasinhealth>. Data is posted to Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment website at <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/animas-river-spill>, at EPA's website at <http://www2.epa.gov/goldkingmine>. La Plata County has set up a call center for questions from citizens at 970-385-8700, open from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Southern Ute Tribal members may call the Tribal Hotline at 970-563-5025.

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**From:** Harrison, Melissa  
**Sent:** Friday, August 14, 2015 12:44 PM  
**To:** McGrath, Shaun  
**Cc:** Ostrander, David; Ruhl, Christopher; Calanog, Steve; Hestmark, Martin  
**Subject:** Re: REVISED PRESS RELEASE WITH EPA-REVIEW NOW

NOTE: We are confirming lead, copper, cadmium. These may changes. Everything else is good.

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**From:** Harrison, Melissa  
**Sent:** Friday, August 14, 2015 12:41 PM  
**To:** McGrath, Shaun  
**Cc:** Ostrander, David; Ruhl, Christopher; Calanog, Steve; Hestmark, Martin  
**Subject:** REVISED PRESS RELEASE WITH EPA-REVIEW NOW

See edits below including EPA language on sediment. We need approval by 11 local time.

# Deliberative Process/Ex. 5

# **Deliberative Process/Ex. 5**

# Deliberative Process/Ex. 5

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**From:** McGrath, Shaun  
**Sent:** Friday, August 14, 2015 12:15 PM  
**To:** Harrison, Melissa  
**Cc:** Ostrander, David; Ruhl, Christopher; Calanog, Steve; Hestmark, Martin  
**Subject:** Re: REVISED sediment statement-REVIEW ASAP

Looks good to me. Please fold into county press release (with EPA language highlighted) and get around to UAC.

Also, add in the ATSDR language.

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 14, 2015, at 10:12 AM, Harrison, Melissa <[Harrison.Melissa@epa.gov](mailto:Harrison.Melissa@epa.gov)> wrote:

This is the language we want to use in the joint release. Need to know if you're good NOW.

**Deliberative Process/Ex. 5**